

Hello! My name is Seerut Mir and I am a sophomore at UCONN as an English major on the pre-med track. I was born in Pakistan but my parents moved to Meriden, CT when I was 9 months old to make sure that my siblings and I would have the best opportunity for education. Because both of my parents don't have college degrees and they wanted us to be able to pursue any career we wanted.

As the eldest daughter to immigrant parents, I uphold responsibilities that most of my other friends don't have. With my parents not knowing English that well, I often find myself helping my dad send emails, file paperwork, or talk on the phone. While these acts may seem simple, it is dire that I step in to help because no one else can. Watching my parents struggle to build a business from nothing, I knew that I had to be resourceful and get a college degree.

Being a Muslim, first-gen, and low-income student, I knew applying to college would be a challenge. Having no one to assist me with applying for college, I knew that the odds of me getting accepted were against me. When I was accepted to UConn, I was excited to be able to become involved in a community that shared my values. My acceptance to UConn required that I participate in the Student Support Services (SSS) program, which meant I had to take five weeks of summer classes in the summer of 2020. I saw this as an opportunity for myself to succeed and gain college credit.

Since making my decision to come to UConn through the SSS program, I have received tremendous benefits, including being connected to opportunities which I otherwise may not have known about, such as the McNair Apprenticeship. This program has allowed me to work directly with a faculty member on research. I am proud to say that I now have secured a spot in a laboratory to conduct my own project as a sophomore, after entering college during a global pandemic.

I have found such value in these programs as they have given me a well-rounded experience so far here at UCONN and will help me reach my goal of becoming a physician in the state of CT, I urge you to continue to fund these programs and the Hartford campus to allow other low-income students and first-generation students to benefit from programs like these.

I would like to thank everyone for their time today and would like to acknowledge that it is a privilege to be able to get an education from UCONN.